

“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”

December 23, 2016

Jeremiah 44:1–46:28. The self-deception of anchoring truth in pragmatism and inductivism.

Romans 11:1–10. The grace of God bestows a whole new supralife.

Proverbs 25:1–28. Honor the king by the balanced, whole truth, total truth perspective.

COMMENTS.

Jeremiah 44:1–46:28. Chapter 44 records another of Jeremiah’s Egyptian messages. Addressing all the Judean exiles living in Egypt, the prophet reminded them that God’s judgment upon Jerusalem was due to the people’s idolatry. Their persistence in worshipping idol-gods would only lead to a further outpouring of God’s angry judgment. The people responded to Jeremiah’s warning with hostility. They declared that they would continue to sacrifice to the “Queen of Heaven,” the Babylonian goddess Ishtar. They thought disaster had only come upon Judah because Josiah purged the land of foreign gods (2 Kgs 23). Jeremiah attempted to correct their faulty reasoning, pointing out that it was idolatry that had brought God’s wrath upon the nation. In the face of such obstinacy Jeremiah announced that divine judgment would overtake them in Egypt. In **chapter 45** Jeremiah encourages Baruch. He assures him that the Lord would protect him through the disaster. **Chapter 46** contains oracles of judgment on Egypt. This prophecy of the Babylonian invasion of Egypt took place in 567 B.C. The Egyptians would be as helpless as trees of a forest before the axes of woodsmen. Pharaoh and the gods of Egypt, including even their chief deity Amon, would be unable to resist the Lord’s judgment. The chapter concludes with an encouraging message for God’s people. Once their time of punishment was over, the Lord would deliver them from exile and restore them to their land.

Life in God by second person proper knowledge and proper love. Note the self-deception in the pragmatic and inductive methodology of determining right and wrong by “if it works, it must be right.” When these Jews lived in Judah and secretly worshiped the Queen of Heaven (Astarte or Ishtar, goddess of fertility), everything went well with them. They had plenty of food and enjoyed comfortable circumstances. But when King Josiah made the people give up their idols, things began to get worse for them. Conclusion: They were better off when they disobeyed God and worshiped idols! The inductive and pragmatic approach saturates much of contemporary Christianity in politics, economics, and the Christian faith. To be honest, I do not think I have the power in my lifetime to get very many believers to examine their Anchor of Truth due to the influence of inductivism. What is needed to change a person’s orientation is philosophical realism’s whole truth, total truth perspective. Unless and until a person desires truth above all else, he will continue to distort truth of Scripture with respect to the essence of Christianity and truth regarding a host of governmental and political issues. Of course, the most effective way to gain the virtue of truth above all else is to walk in God *by proper knowledge and proper love*, a love which motivates a believer to seek God’s viewpoint above all preferences. It is an unfortunate fact that many Christians hold dogmatically to certain positions that Christ would not hold to; and we know what He would hold to because we have the whole truth, total truth of all of Scripture. Of course, if one really wants the truth above all else, he already knows what Scripture says about the rise and

fall of nations and the countless other issues related to the existence and rise and fall of nations. The philosophical realist stands in radical contrast to the inductivist who formulates his views of government and God based on his preferential cherry-picking of the facts—as we often seen in both extremes of the political parties. By nature, the inductivist can never rise above it all and so can never gain true divine wisdom. As a matter of fact, as noted, some conservative Christians dogmatically say and believe things that the Lord Jesus Christ would never say—a fact that they are unable to recognize. Again, the most effective way out of this darkness is commitment to life with God above all else, a life that grows *in proper knowledge and proper love* instead of the life of darkness that Christ promised to all who live inductively and pragmatically by putting this pragmatic world and its things ahead of Christ and His eternal truths (Matt. 6:19-24).

Romans 11:1–10. These ten verses describe God’s sovereign choice. Paul illustrates the principle that God’s rejection of Israel is not total. A Jewish remnant continues to exist. This remnant (Jewish Christians) did not exist because of works they had done but because they had been selected by God on the basis of His grace. Grace and works are mutually exclusive principles. If the remnant had earned their position by their works, then grace would no longer have been grace. As a remnant “chosen by grace” there was absolutely no room for personal merit or meritorious performance. Although the seven thousand in the days of Elijah were certainly worthy of commendation for their faithfulness to Yahweh, in the case of the remnant in Paul’s day there was nothing they had done that would ever merit their standing as God’s people.

Life in God by second person proper knowledge and proper love. True and pure grace really is the most beautiful thing. True grace should never be reduced to mere forgiveness for sin, though it certainly includes that. Grace bends down to the greatest evildoer and offers a new life of partaking of the very life of God and thus share in His love and life! Grace is the outpouring of God’s love and life into man. Grace brings new life, new desires, new knowledge, a totally new eternal perspective. Grace not only removes all guilt and condemnation, it imputes (justification) and imparts experiential righteousness (sanctification) in man’s innermost being. What we have in Christ is grace, not law, not legalism. What we have in Christ’s grace is nothing less than participation in the life of the Trinity, a suprahuman life only possible by His matchless grace.

Proverbs 25:1–28. The **first fifteen verses** deal with royal etiquette with reference to the king's role as well as how to behave in his presence. The point here is that prudence, discretion, and patience are essential for anyone who would deal with governmental authorities. **Verses 16-27** cover a sundry of interpersonal relations. The one who too frequently visits at a friend's house risks becoming an unwelcome sight (25:16–17). The one who does not know how to read a friend's mood will soon anger him or her (25:20). Sometimes the best way to win a conflict is to surprise an adversary with kindness (25:21–22).

Life in God by second person proper knowledge and proper love. Note the respect for *kings* that is taught in this reading. It is my view that there are far too many Christians who have a belligerent attitude to government, an attitude that is not supported by the Word of God or by any great believer in the Bible. Consider Moses (1st forty years), Joseph, Daniel and his friends, Jesus and His family, Apostle Paul, Apostle Peter, and Romans 13. One of the greatest blessings of a total truth perspective is that one does not become polarized, which always skews one's perspective and tends to make one more irritable, especially with reference to politics. Without the whole truth perspective, even believers tend to become meaner and more paranoid. At any rate, they are not able to really thrive with God by the proper knowledge and proper love of government as a servant of God (Rom. 13:1-7). Instead of appreciating government as God's servant, they inherently oppose it and by doing so oppose God (Rom. 13:2). We should hold government accountable and get the bums out that abuse authority and the people's money. Moreover, we should pray for our government so that we can live peaceful and tranquil lives (1 Timothy 2:2, *for kings and all who are in authority, in order that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity*)—note that qualities like tranquility are not generally found in those who are always fighting against or running down the government. Let us not forget the biblical attitude. It is the biblical attitude that enables to grow in the abundant life with Him instead of unknowingly fighting against God's servant. Let us not forget that Nero was on the throne when Paul wrote Romans 13, and that prayer for a *king* certainly recognizes the king's authority in many matters that are not spiritual as such. When it comes to spiritual matters, it is a different story altogether, Acts 5:29 *But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men.* In short, proper love and knowledge of God always brings a tranquility that one cannot find anywhere else, certainly not in any political arena. It provides the balance we all need to properly "*Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king*" (1 Peter 2:17) and thus "*lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity*" (1 Tim. 2:2).

*Life in God by second person proper knowledge and by proper love,
Pastor Don*